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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TASHKENT 002000

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN BRIAN RORAFF, EUR/ACE RICK STODDARD

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [UZ](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL APPARAT WAITING FOR U.S. RESPONSE TO
"SIGNALS"

Classified By: Poloff Tim Buckley for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (C) Summary. Visiting AmCit National Democratic Institute (NDI) Senior Program Director for Eurasia was approached on the margins of a civil society conference on November 15 by a member of the GOU Presidential Apparatus. The woman asked why the USG has not responded to the recent "signals" put forth by the GOU about greater engagement. She also inquired about how much emphasis the USG was placing on human rights issues as a condition for reengagement, particularly regarding Andijon. This rather odd approach to NDI may suggest that the Uzbeks want to confirm that we're getting their subtle hints about some project areas, but they want the USG to make the visible overtures. The GOU remains concerned about the USG reaction to elections and whether human rights concerns will hold up other aspects of the relationship which it gradually wants to develop. It would be surprising if the GOU were looking for overtures prior to elections, especially after recently denying key contractors accreditation to facilitate the completion of the portal monitor border security project. But such mixed signals might suggest internal division within the Apparatus between those seeking closer ties and those protecting entrenched interests. End summary.

Criticism of US Foreign Policy at Conference

12. (C) Poloff attended an evening reception after the first day of a two-day conference entitled "Democratic Development: Security, Human Rights, Cooperation for the Future." The conference is jointly sponsored by OSCE, NDI, and the Uzbekistan-based Foundation of Regional Policy. There were many lively discussions, and visiting participants bemoaned attacks on US foreign policy, particularly by pro-Russian speakers and participants. However, the AmCit NDI Country Director pointed out that "although these conferences can be talk shops, the GOU still allows foreign participants to attend whom they know will speak their minds." NDI continues to plan three or four such conferences per year in Uzbekistan, and they are confident the GOU is comfortable with the format. (Comment: Embassy shares the view that on balance these conferences are very worthwhile, affording some of the only venues in Uzbekistan for formal and informal dialogue on sensitive political issues. End comment.)

Apparatus Approaches Visiting NDI Official

13. (C) The AmCit NDI Senior Program Director for Eurasia was approached on the margins of the conference on November 15 by a woman who identified herself as working in the Presidential Apparat. She was straightforward about asking why the Embassy had not responded to the "signals" being sent by the GOU seeking greater engagement. The NDI representative got the impression that the GOU does not want to be the one to ask but is awaiting overtures from the US side. She asked him about how much emphasis the US intends to place on human rights issues in assessing the scope of reengagement, which is definitely an area of concern for the GOU. She specifically mentioned Andijon and seemed to be gauging whether demands for follow-up might fade. (Note: Emboffs have indeed picked up on hints put forth by GOU officials implying that increased programming would be welcome, particularly on law enforcement. The recent decision to deny accreditation renewal to Washington Group International (WGI) to complete the portal monitor border security project is, though, certainly not a positive signal. End note.)

Comment

14. (C) While emboffs have been noticing signs of increased GOU willingness to engage on some issues, it would be surprising if the GOU were impatient for US overtures prior to the Presidential elections. It would also be inconsistent with the recent decision to deny accreditation to WGI to complete the DTRA portal monitor border security project. Such incongruence may suggest divisions between factions within the Apparat who want closer ties and NSS stakeholders who want to protect entrenched interests. This and other contact with the GOU is leading us to wonder whether

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information passed through MFA is reaching all appropriate officials in Apparat and NSS. The MFA's effort to intercept a meeting the Ambassador requested with President Karimov to discuss human rights issues is a further reflection of this dynamic (septel).
NORLAND